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'Secret Agenda Was Haig Deep Throat?

He is one of the most mysterious and legendary figures in American politics and journalism, the "insider" whose information helped a newspaper to topple a presidency. He is *The Washington Post's* "Deep Throat," the source used by then-reporter, now Assistant Managing Editor Bob Woodward to gather and confirm information about the Watergate scandal in the years 1972-1974. Largely due to Deep Throat's help, Mr. Woodward and his co-reporter Carl Bernstein were awarded a Pulitzer Prize.

In this, the first of two condensed excerpts from the new book "Secret Agenda: Watergate, Deep Throat, and the CIA," author Jim Hougan speculates as to Deep Throat's identity, and the very real possibility that Deep Throat kept a credulous Bob Woodward from delving into the real inside story of Watergate: the participation of the CIA.

In considering the identity of Bob Woodward's most important and most secret source, "Deep Throat," it should be said at the very beginning that any conclusion must be speculative. Only Woodward and Deep Throat — if there is a Deep Throat — can be certain of the latter's identity. And if, as many of Woodward's colleagues in the Washington press corps believe, Throat is actually a composite of several sources, then the secret of their separate identities may never be known.

Still, it is possible to reach several conclusions based upon what we know about Woodward and what we are told about Throat. If, for example, Throat is a public figure who served in the Nixon administration in a highly visible capacity, then only one person comes close to satisfying Woodward's description of his source. If, on the other hand, Throat is (or was) a relatively obscure bureaucrat, then the problem is more complex.

One's interest in the subject is more than idle curiosity. As the guiding light behind much of the *Post's* Watergate reportage, Throat has a historic responsibility with respect to the Nixon administration's downfall. One would like to know who he is.

The *Post's* editors insist that they are only protecting a valuable source. They would have us believe that Throat is an altruist who seeks no personal gain and who wants to shun the tribulations that sometimes attend whistle-blowers. The suggestion, then, is that Throat is a patriotic civil servant who, while outraged by the administration's disregard of constitutional concerns, fears the retribution that has been meted out to other whistle-blowers. But, surely, this is a specious argument.

The whistle that he blew was heard 'round the world, and a grateful nation has offered to bestow its accolades upon him even as publishers dangle the lure of seven-figure advances for his story. Clearly, Deep Throat's anonymity has nothing to do with job security. It may be, therefore, that Throat remains anonymous because if he was identified our perception of him and of the *Post's* Watergate reportage would change.

That is, it may be that Throat's position within the Nixon administration was such that he would stand revealed as a Machiavellian figure moved more by his own ambitions than by any concern for fair play in national politics. In which case, Woodward and the *Post* would be seen as mere tools in a power struggle. So there is reason to be skeptical. While Woodward and Bernstein prefer to believe in Deep Throat's altruism, we should not trust their judgment on that matter: the *Post's* reporters, after all, have an important stake in the selflessness of their source.

Two routes may be taken in an attempt to identify Deep Throat. The first is a study of Woodward and Bernstein's best-selling account of their Watergate investigation, "All The President's Men."

Let us begin with the assumption that Throat was a famous man. Even if that assumption turns out to be incorrect, it will be helpful to review Woodward's contacts with his source, and what he had to say about him.

The first Watergate-related contact between Woodward and Deep

Throat occurred on June 19, 1972, two days after the arrests. Woodward tells us he telephoned "an old friend," a federal employee who sometimes helped him with needed information. His friend, Woodward adds, did not like getting calls at the office and all he would say on this occasion was that the break-in story was about to "heat up."

Later that same day Woodward again called his friend. On an off-

the-record basis, the reporter was told that the FBI considered E. Howard Hunt to be a major suspect in the case. That it was Deep Throat who passed this information to Woodward is stated explicitly in "All The President's Men."

The most important clue imbedded in Woodward's account of this contact is, of course, the news that Throat was already an "old friend" when the Watergate affair began. Indeed, Woodward tells us that he and Throat spent many evenings together, "long before Watergate," discussing power politics in the capital.

The conditions under which Woodward spoke to his source are interesting in their own right. Some of the conversations were "off the record," which meant that their contents could not appear in print. Other talks were held on the basis of "deep background," which is to say that the information could be used to inform a story or generate leads but could not be cited directly.

Moreover, Woodward tells us, he had promised Deep Throat that he would never reveal the man's position with the government, nor would he ever quote him, not even anonymously. Insofar as Watergate was concerned, Throat would be a guide: he would offer "perspective" and confirm leads that the *Post* had already developed, but he would not be expected to leak information of which the *Post* was unaware.

These are extraordinarily protective conditions, but what is most surprising about them is that they were cast to the winds so very quickly. Woodward did identify Throat to others — to Carl Bernstein, for example, and to Ben Bradlee. Throat did supply leads as well as guidance and perspective, and he did come to be quoted anonymously in the *Post* (albeit not until

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